



# ***Voting Information News***

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## **Voting Assistance Officers**

### **"To Do" This Month:**

✓ Ensure that you have an adequate supply of Federal Post Card Applications (FPCA) (SF-76) on hand to distribute to the citizens you help. FVAP recommends that all citizens submit a new FPCA to their local election official in January of each year. This FPCA will register or confirm the citizen's registration, will act as a request for absentee ballots for any elections to be held that year, and will inform the local election official of the citizen's current mailing address.

✓ Plan your 2007 voter training sessions early. Visit the FVAP website, [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov), frequently to be aware of scheduled and special elections that occur during 2007. Use the training opportunities on the website as a basis for the training you conduct with your citizens. The slides can be tailored to fit your particular needs.

***A roundup of voting news from the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) for voters, potential voters and those who assist voters.***

## **Making the Voting Process Easier!**

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) works closely with state and local officials and legislators in pursuing legislative initiatives to make absentee voting easier for citizens voting under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act. Because electoral laws vary widely from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, the FVAP seeks input from and coordinates its efforts directly through state and local election officials, state legislators, and their staffs. Annually, FVAP sends recommended, general legislative initiatives aimed at simplifying the absentee registration and voting process to each state. FVAP also coordinates other initiatives with individual states that address unique situations. Here is a closer look at the general legislative initiatives.

### **The Need for 45 Day Ballot Transit Time**

We ask the states and territories to allow a minimum of 45 days between the date the ballot is mailed to the citizen and the date by which the citizen must return the voted ballot to the local election official. This would be particularly beneficial for overseas citizens at both civilian and military locations. Allowing for sufficient mail transit time helps avoid resorting to ad hoc arrangements.

### **Elimination of Notary Requirements**

The National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) of 1993 eliminated notary requirements on all applications for voter registration. However, some states may still require notarization of FPCAs

requesting an absentee ballot or on the ballot return envelope. This procedure can be cumbersome and difficult to obtain as well as quite expensive in some foreign countries. FVAP recommends this requirement be fulfilled by allowing citizens to execute a self-administered oath.

### **❑ Late Registration Alternative**

Often the date of separation from active duty for a Uniformed Service member or the date a citizen returns from overseas and a state's registration requirements combine to disenfranchise these citizens. Allowing these citizens to register locally past the regular deadline for registration, even on the day of the election, would prevent their disenfranchisement.

### **❑ State Write-In Absentee Ballot**

Submariners, Peace Corps volunteers, missionaries and many other citizens stationed in remote locations, unable to receive regular absentee ballots sent in the normal time frame due to irregular mail service, would be provided with a state write-in absentee ballot in advance of an election allowing them to write in the name of their candidates or party preferences. Unlike the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) which in most states allows voting for Federal offices only, the State Special Write-In Ballot would provide a full slate of offices to be voted upon.

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## **Happy Holidays**

***To everyone involved in the  
Absentee voting process***

## "To Do" This Month (continued):

✓ Ensure that you are on the distribution list for the FVAP News Releases and this Newsletter. The VIN is available by e-mail, regular mail, or both! News Releases are available only by e-mail. Contact our office (see page 4) to be added to the distribution list.

**NOTE:** The appearance of external hyperlinks does not constitute endorsement by the United States Federal Government, United States Department of Defense or the Federal Voting Assistance Program of the linked web sites, or the information, products or services contained therein. The Federal Voting Assistance Program does not exercise any editorial control over the information you may find at these locations.

## Legislative Initiatives (cont.)

### Electronic Transmission of Election Materials

While most absentee election materials are successfully sent by mail, legislation providing for this alternate method of transmitting election materials would allow the voter to fax or email the FPCA for registration and absentee ballot request to the election official. In addition, the local election official could fax or email the blank ballot to and accept the voted ballot from the voter where circumstances would otherwise disenfranchise a voter. Most states currently have provisions allowing for some aspect of the process by electronic transmission.

### Expanded Use of the FWAB

Currently, use of the FWAB is allowed for voting for Federal offices in general elections only. Since this form is pre-positioned overseas, by expanding its use to include special, primary and runoff elections, citizens would not be disenfranchised because regular ballots are not received on time. The FVAP is also asking the states to expand use of the FWAB by accepting it as a simultaneous registration form and voted ballot. The information requested on the FWAB voter's declaration/affirmation is the same as the information requested from the voter on the FPCA.

### Enfranchise Citizens Who Have Never Resided in the U.S.

Approximately 50,000 U.S. citizens who have never resided in the U.S. are not entitled to vote under current law in many states. While they are subject to other requirements of citizenship, they are not eligible to vote. FVAP asks the states to allow these citizens to vote where either parent is eligible to vote under UOCAVA.

### Emergency Authority for the Chief Election Official

Granting emergency authority to the chief election official (CEO) in the state or territory would allow the CEO to designate alternate methods for handling absentee ballots in times of a declared emergency. In addition to the listed initiatives, FVAP provides each state with suggested legislative language that may be used as a model for drafting legislation specific for that state. FVAP also readily provides states with legislative and technical assistance as well as testimonial evidence of the purpose and implications of each initiative. ☑

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## Don't Stop Now Your Voting Assistance Program Continues

**Reports:** Although the 2006 elections are behind us, your voting assistance program continues. Now is an excellent time to gather your thoughts and materials to prepare an after action report for your reporting organization. It has been a year of many voting outreach activities and your dedication and efforts should not go unnoticed.

Your efforts will be reflected in your appraisal (military personnel) but submitting your after action report and sharing lessons learned and good ideas with other VAOs are key to improving the absentee voting

process. You may have had to build your program with no continuity folder or without local assistance. FVAP appreciates the work you have done; not only the assistance provided to U.S. citizens but also for your efforts in building your voting assistance program. Don't let your efforts fall to the wayside. Prepare your reports so that they portray a voting assistance program with the credit it deserves. Your report will help in the continued success of your program locally and the Federal Voting Assistance Program in general.

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## Your Voting Assistance Program Continues (cont.)

**Continuity File:** Continuity of your program is of the utmost importance and not only because it is an item on your appraisal checklist (military personnel). If you are going on leave or transferring to a new assignment make sure you update your continuity folder. Within the Uniformed Services, Federal agencies, Embassies/Consulates, and international organizations and corporations new Voting Assistance Officers (VAOs) are appointed frequently. Many times these new VAOs are unfamiliar with their duties and responsibilities. If you are continuing as a VAO, a continuity file contains vital reference in the performance of your duties. For this reason, the FVAP stresses the importance of developing and/or maintaining a voting continuity file that can be used year after year and passed on to your successor.

The continuity file should contain basic details on absentee voting procedures; key election materials, emails, copies of this newsletter, news releases, websites and any material that may help your successor perform effectively. The continuity file should also provide the VAO with an orientation of his or her voting responsibilities, duties in helping to meet the organization's absentee voting needs, and local procedures to order election materials. Make sure you include a copy of your after action report, good ideas and lessons learned. See your installation VAO or Service Voting Action Officer for guidance. Chapter 2 of the Voting Assistance Guide provides guidance for submitting good ideas. You may also email the FVAP directly.

**Voting Assistance:** In off-election years VAOs continue to provide assistance. There are many state and local elections being held. Although not as frequent as during election years, throughout the year you will be assisting voters to register, request absentee ballots and to submit change of address for those citizens that have moved and new arrivals to your organization. You should continue to announce your voting assistance program. If not adequately announced, members in the organization will not know there is a voting assistance program or a VAO available.

The main duty of a VAO is to obtain and distribute voting related materials and to provide assistance to all of the citizens that they are appointed to help. The VAO helps ensure that these citizens understand how to vote absentee and what their voting rights are under the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)*.

The voting materials should be available through normal supply distribution channels. If you are having trouble obtaining these materials, please contact your Service Voting Action Officer for further assistance (contact information listed below).

You are not alone. Your installation VAO, your Service Voting Action Officer and FVAP will continue to provide assistance throughout off-election years as well. ☒

### Voting Action Officers

#### Department of State: Office of Overseas Citizens Services

Chief VAO: Mr. Jack Markey, **tel:** (202) 736-4937, **fax:** (202) 647-6201, **Email:** [votinginfo@state.gov](mailto:votinginfo@state.gov)  
Deputy VAO: Ms. Stefanie Eye, **tel:** (202) 647-5435, **fax:** (202) 647-6201

#### Service Voting Action Officers

**U.S. Dept. of the Army:** Mr. Alton Perry **tel:** (703) 325-4530 **DSN:** 221-4530; **fax:** (703) 325-4532  
**DSN fax:** 221-4532, **Email:** [alton.perryj@hoffman.army.mil](mailto:alton.perryj@hoffman.army.mil),  
**https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/Active/TAGD/pssd/psb/votingindex.htm**

**U.S. Dept. of the Navy:** LT David Truman **tel:** 1-866-U-ASK-NPC (827-5672) (select option 6 from menu),  
**fax:** (901) 874-6825, **DSN fax:** 882-6825,  
**Email:** [vote@navy.mil](mailto:vote@navy.mil), **http://www.cni.navy.mil/NavyVote/Index.html**

**U.S. Dept. of the Air Force:** Mr. John Lowrance **tel:** (210) 565-5000, **toll free:** 1-800 616-3775 (Select options 1, then 1, then 2 from menu), **DSN** 665-5000; **fax:** (210) 565-2543, **DSN fax:** 665-2543;  
**Email:** [afpc/dpffofvotefund@randolph.af.mil](mailto:afpc/dpffofvotefund@randolph.af.mil); **http://www.afcrossroads.com/VoteFund/Vote/default.htm**

**U.S. Marine Corps:** Mr. David E. James **tel:** (703) 784-9511, **DSN:** 278-9511; **fax:** (703) 784-9823,  
**DSN fax:** 278-9823; **Email:** [david.e.james@usmc.mil](mailto:david.e.james@usmc.mil)  
**https://www.manpower.usmc.mil/pls/portal/url/page/m\_ra\_home/MR/Personnel/Voting**

**U.S. Coast Guard:** LTJG Dan Owen **tel:** (202)-267-1709, **fax:** (202) 267-4823;  
**Email:** [downen@comdt.uscg.mil](mailto:downen@comdt.uscg.mil),  
**http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-w/g-wpm/g-wpm-1/VotingAssistance/Voting\_Assistance.htm**

All of the above can also be reached through the DoD Voting Information Center and the FVAP Website.

Feel free to copy, redistribute, or use *Voting Information News* articles in other publications.

**Federal Voting  
Assistance Program**

Department of Defense  
1155 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC  
20301-1155

PHONE:  
(703) 588-1584  
DSN 425-1584

FAX  
(703) 696-1352  
DSN 426-1352

VOTING INFORMATION  
CENTER (VIC):  
(703) 588-1343  
DSN 425-1343

TOLL FREE (VIC and FVAP  
staff member):  
1-800-438-VOTE (8683)

Visit our website for  
international toll-free phone  
and fax numbers.

EMAIL:  
[vote@fvap.ncr.gov](mailto:vote@fvap.ncr.gov)

Comments or suggestions on  
this newsletter are welcome.

Website:  
[www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov)

**Vote!**

# Thank You and Happy Holidays!

With the 2006 General election behind us, the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) would like to take this opportunity to extend our deepest thanks and appreciation to all the people who helped make it possible for the military and overseas citizens to vote in the Primary, Special, Runoff and General elections which took place this year.

We thank the Voting Assistance Officers (VAOs) worldwide, for providing information and assistance and distributing voting materials. In the Uniformed Services and merchant marine, VAOs assisted their fellow personnel as well as their family members. Many other *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act* (UOCAVA) citizens were assisted through Embassies, Consulates, overseas U.S. citizen organizations and corporations who

dedicated time to distributing Federal Post Card Applications, holding voting workshops and registration drives. Many international English-language media assisted citizens in voting absentee in this election year by publishing election dates, contact information and other pertinent U.S. election news.

And, as always, we thank the thousands of State and Local Election Officials nationwide for their extraordinary cooperation and professional assistance to UOCAVA citizens and the FVAP.

Thank you again for all of your efforts which helped to get out the vote and ensure that the UOCAVA citizens who are away from home were able to exercise their right to vote. ☑

## Happy New Year!

**Moving?** Send an FPCA to notify your local election official. Also, send us an email so that you and your replacement can continue receiving this *newsletter*.

**Federal Voting Assistance Program**  
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1155 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-1155



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